Techno-mediated Inheritance: Sichuan Dialect in Short Video Era on TikTok

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the Sichuan dialect is inherited and transmitted through short videos on TikTok.

Focusing on digital environments as active agents in cultural preservation, the research uses multimodal discourse analysis to examine how dialectal knowledge is shared, imitated, and recontextualized across audiovisual content and user interactions.

Rather than simply reviving dialects, TikTok facilitates a new, informal mode of intergenerational transmission. The study argues that technological platforms play an increasingly important role in shaping how language inheritance occurs in contemporary society, especially among youth. Findings offer insights into language sustainability through media participation.

Keywords: Techno-mediated inheritance, Sichuan dialect, TikTok, Digital language transmission, Multimodal discourse, Youth and dialect use, Language preservation in social media

INTRODUCTION

Introduce the Issues

The last several decades have seen vast declines in the use of regional dialects in China, largely due to the promotion of Mandarin nationally, internal migration, and increasing prevalence of standardized schools. Many dialects, even ones previously thriving like that of Sichuan, are not receiving systematic inheritance, no longer taking place across generations. As inheritance practices have failed to include traditional forms of inheritance such as oral traditions, family-based teaching, and neighbourhood speech communities, researchers are beginning to question whether linguistic diversity will eventually be lost to contemporary society's rapid development.

At the same time, digital cultures have led to developments in familiar, yet newly engaging, language practices where younger people are interacting, learning, and expressing their lives through the digital world. As an example, TikTok (Douyin), a short video-based social media platform, is an important new cultural site for dialectal language to re-emerge, not literally and in ways to consider instructions, but through highly stylized, multimodal, and participatory forms. The sociolinguistic question this raises is whether these performances are just fleeting moments of entertainment, or do they serve a new way of dialectal inheritance whilst mediated by the digital?

Highlight the Importance of the Issues

The need to study dialect inheritance (or 'mined' dialect use) in digital spaces is of cultural and academic significance. Culturally, dialects act as important carriers of regional identity, local knowledge, humour, and a shared memory. Dialects disappearing indicates a loss of regional and linguistic diversity, which narrows ways of expressing ourselves and our culture. Academically, it is a necessity to study dialects that have rapidly gained popularity on digital platforms—and used primarily by young dialect speakers—especially in terms of how those dialects are learned, produced, circulated, and enacted in daily life and in relation to their schooling experiences.

Moreover, approaches aimed at language preservation tend to be more top-down around documentation and inclusion in education types which sometimes lose sight of the fluid, emergent, and vernacular way we use dialect in digital spaces. Platforms such as TikTok might represent a bottom-up, participant-led space where dialects are not simply reclaimed but inherited through informal, performative and interactivity. Therefore, there is a need for new thinking and empirical study for how platform affordances, audience and participant relationships, and semiotics of language in short videos.

Background of the Study

The Sichuan dialect is one of China's most popular regional vernaculars, one of the few in China that still has prominent and unusual phonetic, lexical, and cultural characteristics compared to standard Mandarin. Though the dialect still appears to be prominent in rural and informal use, it is increasingly absent in formal registers, mass media, and intergenerational conversations.

However, a significant increase in short, humorous TikTok videos, more dialect mimicry skits, and meme-form expressions appears to indicate dialectal speech is being recontextualized to the aesthetics and mechanics of digital culture.

TikTok has emerged as a major sociolinguistic arena where dialects, including Sichuanese, are recontextualized through short-form videos, comedic dubbing, meme remixing, and user-generated hashtags. Unlike traditional media, which often excludes non-standard speech, TikTok enables dialectal content to achieve virality and visibility. Trends such as dubbing international media (e.g., Harry Potter or Peppa Pig) in the Sichuan dialect exemplify a new mode of cultural remixing that contextualizes local language use within global formats. These new hybrid artifacts are not just entertainment; they serve as informal modes of dialect acquisition or learning, particularly for urban youth who have little or no sustained offline engagement or exposure to their language of ancestry. The affordances of the platform—audio filters, subtitles, algorithmic curation—mediate the stylization, commodification, and interpretation of the dialect and furthermore facilitate active mediation and ultimately the creation of cultural inheritance.

Objectives of the Research Paper

The aim of the research is to investigate how the Sichuan dialect is inherited as opposed to revived in the TikTok short video context. This aim is delineated into specific objectives that focus on:

1. Does the dissemination of Sichuan dialect on TikTok promote the inheritance of dialects?
2. How are audiences and content creators involved as participants in creating an informal, playful, yet salient model of language inheritance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant Sociolinguistic Theories

The convergence of digital media and dialect preservation is a growing area of sociolinguistics research especially in the case of platforms like TikTok. This literature review assesses the technologically mediated inheritance of the Sichuan dialect alongside relevant sociolinguistic theories, scholarly debates, earlier research, and contemporary positions.

1) Language Vitality：Giles et al.'s (1977) 'ethnolinguistic vitality theory' suggests that the basis of language maintenance is found within three important domains: status, demographics, and institutional support. Useful applied frameworks for assessing the sustainability of dialects within various digital spaces are based on the concept of language vitality (UNESCO, 2003). With regard to the digital proliferation of the Sichuan dialect, there may be an increase to its vitality value in the face of increasing popularity in TikTok, counterbalancing the impact of the most dominant variety, Standard Mandarin.

2) Language Ideology Theory：When analyzing the inheritance of Sichuan dialect on short video platforms, how it is 'performed' and presented reveals the ideological operation behind labels such as 'authentic', 'funny',

'local', and 'local trend'. Language Ideology Theory provides us with a key perspective.

Language ideology is defined as "people's beliefs, emotions, and value judgments about language, which reflect and serve social structures and power relations" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). In other words, the use and acceptance of dialects is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also embedded in the deep logic of power, identity, and cultural identity.

Scholarly Debates and Schools of Thought

Increasingly, sociolinguists are discussing whether the impact of digital platform usage is helping to preserve or indeed eliminate dialects. Within these discussions, some scholars propose that forms of social media are truly helpful towards sustaining, or even revitalizing, dialects, while others suggest the opposite, that it may in fact lead to the demise of dialects through various forms of commodification.

1) Optimistic View：Some scholars argue that digital platforms facilitate dialect preservation (Cunliffe et al., 2013). For Sichuan dialect, TikTok's algorithm-driven visibility may encourage intergenerational transmission (Wang & Liu, 2022). Some scholars even suggest that digital platforms facilitate increased Visibility and Prestige, unlike traditional media, which often marginalizes non-standard dialects, TikTok's algorithm allows niche linguistic content to reach broad audiences (Cunliffe et al., 2013). For example, Wang & Liu (2022) found that Sichuan dialect comedy skits on Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok) received millions of views and legitimized the dialect's cultural meaning.

Some other scholars argue that digital platforms promote intergenerational Transmission. Digital platforms have provided opportunities for younger generations to engage with dialects and actively engage with them in informal terms outside of the formal schooling system. Li (2020), for example, explains that urbanized youth who might otherwise shift to Mandarin are rediscovering the Sichuan dialect through viral trends. Additionally, other scholars also viewed digital platforms as contributing to Community Building, hashtag challenges (e.g., the Sichuan Dialect Challenge) help to foster online communities where speakers can practice and be innovative in dialect practices online (Androutsopoulos, 2014).

2) Critical Perspective— Folklorization：Critics warn that dialect use on social media may be "folkized" (Heller et al., 2018), where linguistic features are hollowed out and reduced to purely performative signs rather than meaningful communication. For example, Deumert (2014) argues that digital dialect use may reinforce stereotypes rather than genuine linguistic vitality; Heller et al. (2018) point out that dialects produced on social media platforms are also often labeled "folk"—often used for comedic effect or nostalgia rather than as actionable forms of communication. In other words, for example, Cornell dialect is often exaggerated in the 'hillbilly' meme, which actually reinforces rural stereotypes that are consistent with the idea of the joke.

Some researchers believe that TikTok today is outright encouraging platform-driven standardized dialects. Some scholars argue that TikTok there are some Platform-Driven Standardization: Despite apparent diversity, TikTok's recommendation algorithms may favor certain dialect performances (e.g., 'entertaining' accents) over others, creating a homogenized version of the dialect (Abidin, 2021).

3) Neutral Perspective—Hybridization：A third perspective recognizes both the benefits and drawbacks of using dialects in digital spaces, highlighting the importance of linguistic adaptation. A frequent result is dialect-Mandarin hybridization. Blommaert and Rampton (2011) argue that digital communication accelerates language contact, leading to new hybrid forms. In the case of dialect Mandarin, internet slang from Mandarin texts is often hybridized with dialect. On social media platforms like TikTok, you can see examples of dialect blended with Mandarin internet slang, like the example of "suan liao" with a meaning and tonal pattern indicative of the Sichuan dialect. Additionally, there are Recontextualization of Tradition. Dialects will evolve to fit new genres (e.g., dialect rap, dubbed TL video snippets) which is different from 'pure' preservation. Recently in film and television, the medium itself has taken a very different approach in some instances, as they have not selected Mandarin as their narrative language, rather they use the Sichuan dialect so that everyone can feel more appropriate in their roles. With this, we also see more recently ways in which a dialect can take on new indexical

meanings, like Agha's (2003) enregisterment theory suggests—Sichuan dialect gains new indexical meanings (e.g., "trendy") beyond its traditional associations. On the other end is Glocalized Identity Performance. About the Glocalized Identity Performance, Young creators use dialect strategically to signal both local belonging and global internet culture (Chen, 2023). For example, when Siuchuanese TikTokers perform duets with international TikTok creators, they are blending local identities with transnational identities.

Lastly, the middle position suggests that dialect inheritance is possible and potentially has new life in the digital spaces.

Previous Studies on Dialect Use in Digital Media

Existing research on digital dialect preservation provides a foundation for understanding Sichuan dialect's trajectory on TikTok. Below, we synthesize key findings from related studies.

1) Regional Dialects on Social Media——Comparative Cases： When we see the Cantonese community on Youtube, Lee (2019) noted that Cantonese- language vlogs sustain diaspora communities but also accelerate English/Chinese code-mixing among youth.

This mirrors anxieties about the hybridisation of Sichuan dialect on TikTok. On Weibo, Wu (2020) noted that while Shanghainese thrives in informal digital contexts (e.g., memes), its functional use declines, indicating a playful usage is unlikely to guarantee an intergenerational transmission. Similar to Sichuan dialect, while Southerner American English is celebrated (e.g., 'Southern charm' trends) and stigmatised (e.g., 'uneducated'), Squires (2022) documented how accents from the Southern U.S. have both indicated the precariousness of dialect prestige online.

2) Sichuan Dialect in Traditional vs. Digital Media： Traditional Media. Historically, Sichuan dialect was largely limited to local TV (e.g., Sichuan Opera) or cast aside as 'low culture' (Hu, 2018). TikTok opens up a new democratized doorway but inherits these ideological burdens. Still, Liu Yuanyuan (2020) pointed out in her study that the equalized use of Sichuan dialect in short videos increased visibility of the language, as provincialized, consumable "regional image" was constructed, with dialect being remade into cultural symbols with commercial values.

Regarding the comedy and authenticity, Xie (2016) having analyzed Sichuan dialect stand-up comedy, captured its two-fold role in bolstering local identity and in responding to expectations of outsiders. TikTok amplifies this tension - creators are searching for realness while responding to algorithmic equity.

3) Platform-Specific Dynamics： TikTok's algorithm inflicts inevitable bias on content, with Abidin (2021) clarifying that TikTok is prioritizing "high engagement" dialect content that is more dependent on punchlines. The ways dialect is represented will inevitably change. With respect to the policy-practice constraints, China's internet language policies unambiguously encourage mandarin-dominant content (Sullivan 2022). Though dialect-based content is permitted, and proscribed by the internet language policy, its advancement is squared-off at the structural level as a key notion for the digital survivability of the Sichuan dialect.

Relevant Perspectives

The techno-mediated inheritance of Sichuan dialect on TikTok intersects with broader sociolinguistic, economic, and cultural discourses. Below, we expand on key perspectives that contextualize the dialect's digital evolution.

1) Political Economy of Digital Dialects： When used in viral trends (e.g. comedy duets, local food reviews), Sichuan dialect functions as a form of 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991), where creators exchange dialect authenticity for visibility, potentially impacting dialect authenticity in the process.

For example, as part of the algorithmic gatekeeping that is TikTok's recommendation system, TikTok values content that maximizes engagement. However, engagement is often based on 'hyperper formative dialect use'

(i.e. exaggerated accents, slapstick humour) as opposed to quotidian dialect speech. This means many TikTok videos neglect a 'real' version of dialect heritage (Abidin, 2021).

For state and platform policies, specifically regarding China, dialect content falls into tension with the state's promotion of Mandarin (Putonghua). Although the Sichuan dialect is not explicitly banned, there is substantial evidence to suggest that content in the Sichuan dialect faces algorithmic reduction when compared to Mandarin dominant content (Sullivan, 2022).

2) Youth Culture and Identity Performance ： For young users from Sichuan, dialect on TikTok is both a 'stylized identity marker' (Eckert, et al., 2018) and a direct way of collecting or unpacking their cultural marking associated with Third-Wave

Sociolinguistics (Incorporate Citations later brief in paragraph). Language differences are also directly related to social 'positionings'. In TikTok, dialect is often used to indicate pride in a participants locality, for example videos accompanying #SichuanVibes and challenges to influences representing pride in their local city through dialect. At the same time, dialect indicated anti-elite authenticity, contrasting the 'unvarnished' dialect with 'polished' Mandarin and therefore framed young Sichuanese dialect participants as more 'real' or 'funnier' (Zhang, 2021).

Dialect mentioned not just noticed authenticities. This could also be seen as nostalgic with trends starting to transform dialect into meme culture, either intentionally or unintentionally by the TikTok's target audience, users can reference dialect phrases without a care for referential meaning. For example, '巴适得板', or 'super comfortable' in Sichuan dialect is a phrase that has become meme climate theatre, divorced from its referential usage in a traditional sense but still indexing Sichuan-ness. This also presented opportunities for what could be described as dialect language entrepreneurship, with young active residents of Chengdu capitalizing on dialect in the TikTok space through for example labeled dialect slang - Calderon, (2021) "using Sichuan dialect buzzwords in labeled economy merchandise" or dubbing global popular content into dialects - Calderon, Dubbing & voiceovers on TikTok of Hollywood clips into sichuan dialect.

3) Globalization vs. Localization ： Sichuan dialect content on Tik Tok embodies Appadurai's (1996) 'mediascapes'—where local identity is remixed with globally dispersed digital culture. This includes Hybrid Language Practices (cross-language code mixing), code-mixing with English in '哈喽老铁们' ('Hello, y'all'), and dialect remixes of global songs, such as Sichuanese versions of K-pop (e.g., short song clips).

Trans local Communities (diasporas of Sichuanese users, e.g., in the U.S. or Europe) use dialect for nostalgic qualities for connection to home. Plus, Platformed Localism (e.g., local content pushes by TikTok, such as city hashtags) 'amplifies but flattens' dialect to a consumable aesthetic.

4) Gender and Class Dimensions ： Dialect use on TikTok is not consistently divided between 'gender, class, and urban-rural divides.

Gendered Performances: Male creators often invoke Sichuanese in workmanlike ways as 'rough', (e.g., 'cursing like a Sichuan uncle'). In contrast, female influencers are often softening dialect to project a gentle 'cute' image (through e.g., rising intonation in clitics).

Urban vs Rural Representations: relatively affluent elite Chengdu users 'polish' their dialects to reach mass audiences. Although rural speakers can be framed as 'authentic yet backward' in viral 'countryside comedy' trends, elite appropriation - e.g., Mandarin-speaking influencers 'trying on' Sichuan dialect, risks 'tokenization'.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design and uses multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) as its sole analytical method. It investigates how the Sichuan dialect is used in Douyin short videos—particularly in

humorous dubbing—and examines how meaning is constructed through both linguistic and multimodal elements. The analysis focuses on how the dialect is stylized, recontextualized, and embedded within audiovisual narratives.

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) is particularly suitable for examining the interaction between speech, subtitles, visual elements and audience responses. This study uses this method to explore how Sichuan dialect serves as a medium for identity expression and informal language transmission in digital media environments. Combined with content analysis, to systematically code the videos. The analysis process ensures reproducibility and transparency

1) Connecting linguistic features with social meanings through triangulation: Identifying interactional contexts in which dialect words appear (e.g., imitation videos under the hashtag #SichuanDialectChallenge)

Analyzing semantic focus in the Top 20 most liked comments (e.g., "authentic," "funny," "want to learn") Comparing differences in dialect performance styles based on creators' backgrounds.

2) *Video selection follows stratified purposeful sampling to ensure:* Representativeness: covering two major dialect-related content categories on Douyin (comedic dubbing and knowledge dissemination)

Diversity: balancing creator attributes (4 dialect video creators vs. 2 entertainment marketing accounts vs. 1 lifestyle video creator vs. 1 official promotional account)

Timeliness: selecting data from 2020–2025 to reflect the impact of algorithm iterations (e.g., stronger regional tagging post-2023)
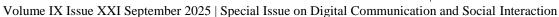
Video Topics	Dialect Intensity	Creator Type	Like Count	Selection Criteria
Harry Potter Dubbing	High (dense slang)	Dialect Video Creator	247K	High like count
The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales Dubbing	High (dense slang)	Dialect Video Creator	647K	High like count
Rango Dubbing	High (dense slang)	Dialect Video Creator	143K	High cultural identification in comments
Crayon Shin-chan Dubbing	High (dense slang)	Lifestyle Video Creator	189K	High cultural identification in comments
Tom and Jerry Dubbing	Medium (occasional slang)	Entertainment Marketing Account	136K	High cultural identification in comments
Spy × Family Dubbing	Medium (occasional slang)	Entertainment Marketing Account	34K	High cultural identification in comments
Dinosaurs Dubbing	High (dense slang)	Dialect Video Creator	216K	High cultural identification in comments
Ne-Zha 2: Demon Child's Rebellion Dubbing	Medium (occasional slang)	Official Promotional Account	14K	Officially released

Table 1: Data of Selected Videos

Category Explanation

3) Dialect Intensity: High/Very High: Contains unique dialectal vocabulary or grammatical structures. Medium: Dialectal expressions mixed with Mandarin.

4) Like Count Range:

• All ≥10,000 likes.

• Selection Criteria: All cases come from the 8 highly interactive videos analyzed in Chapter Six (Chapter Seven mentions the screening standard as at least 1,000 likes; actual cases far exceed this)

1) Creator Types: Lifestyle Video Creator: Individual creators focusing on daily life, personal interests, or opinions. Dialect is not central to their content.

Dialect Video Creator: Individuals or small teams whose content centers on dialect creation (especially dialect dubbing) as the core appeal. Their accounts are highly focused on dialect performance, teaching, or cultural display.

Entertainment Marketing Account: Institutionally managed accounts focusing on monetization and commercial promotion. Their content strategy maximizes attention and interaction, often leveraging trends and popular elements (including dialects) as marketing tools.

Official Promotional Account: Operated by government bodies, mainstream media, or organizations with official backgrounds. Their main goals are policy advocacy, public service, cultural dissemination, or shaping regional/national image.

Data Collection

The dataset is based on ten trending TikTok videos released between May 2020 and May 2025. Each video is accompanied by Sichuanese dubbing for popular media content such as *Harry Potter*, *Peppa Pig*, *Crayon Shin- chan*, and *Spy × Family*. The selection criteria included:

• The dubbing uses Sichuan dialect clearly and consistently.

• Incorporates visual editing, subtitles, and comedic pacing.

• High engagement (at least 1,000 likes or 50 comments).

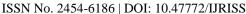The video is publicly accessible through TikTok.

Analytical Procedure

Multimodal discourse analysis was conducted on two levels:

5) *Linguistic Feature Analysis*: This level focused on identifying and understanding key elements of the Sichuan dialect used in dubbing, including characteristic expressions, particles, intonation patterns, reduplication, and syntactic structures.

6) *Sociocultural Indexicality:* This level examined how these linguistic features convey social meanings—such as regional identity, emotional tone, and cultural connections—and how they contribute to shaping locally recognizable personas and communicative attitudes.

Taken together, these two levels of analysis help clarify how the Sichuan dialect serves as both a communicative tool and a stylistic device in TikTok videos, particularly among younger users.

Ethical Considerations

All data in this study were obtained from publicly available TikTok videos. No private messages or personally identifiable information were included. To ensure user privacy, all usernames and any identifiable features were anonymized. This research adhered to established ethical guidelines for studies involving digital media content.

CASE ANALYSIS

This chapter presents a series of case studies of TikTok videos dubbed in Sichuan dialect. Each case study highlights key linguistic features—such as dialect morphemes, phonetic changes, and expressive particles—and their sociocultural referents, such as how humor, intimacy, or identity are expressed through dialect use.

The chapter is structured to cover two dimensions: (1) the linguistic features of each video; and (2) the sociocultural referents.

Sichuanese Dub of Harry Potter

1) Linguistic Features：

Fig. 1 Example of Harry Potter

Example 1: 哎呀~捡个趴活

Original: 哎呀~捡个趴活

Pinyin: Āi yā~ jiǎn gè pā huó

Translation: Oh, my goodness ~ what a bargain！

Linguistic Features:

"趴活" (pā huó): A word from the Sichuan dialect that means "cheap" or "easily obtained" that illustrates the local's practical street smarts.

"哎呀" (āi yā): An interjection used to amplify the tone of pretended surprise and enhance the sense of performative humor.

Example 2: 脑壳遭拽了得嘛

Original: 脑壳遭拽了得嘛

Pinyin: Nǎo ké zāo zhuài liǎo dé ma

Translation: My head is being pulled, okay?

Linguistic Features: "脑壳" (nǎo ké): A dialect word for "head" and contrast with"脑袋" (nao dai) from Standard Mandrian.

"遭拽了得嘛": A passive structure with the sentence-ending particle "得嘛", which adds a humorous sense of defense.

Example 3: 啥子怪头怪脑的哟

Original: 啥子怪头怪脑的哟 and "脑壳遭拽了" (head got yanked) register Sichuanese as a language of playfulness and self-deprecation. These entries embody a working-class, street-smart pragmatism that contrasts with the neutrality and propriety of standard Mandarin.

Sichuanese Dub of The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales

2) Linguistic Features：

Pinyin: Shá zi guài tóu guài nǎo de yo

Translation: What is this strange thing?

Linguistic Features: "啥子" (shá zi): The equivalent of "什么" (shén me) in the Sichuan dialect showing the regional features.

"怪头怪脑": Using a repeat form adds emphasis and makes the absurdity more apparent; the "哟" softens the criticism into playful criticism.

3) Sociocultural Indexicality：bái

Fig. 2 Example of The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales

Example 1: 生病你少跟老子扯谎俩白

Original: 生病你少跟老子扯谎俩白

Pinyin: Shēng bìng nǐ shǎo gēn lǎozi chě huǎng liǎ

Translation: Are you ill? Don't try to fool me.

Linguistic Features:

"老子" (lǎo zi)："I/me" rough but preferable title.

"扯谎俩白": It means 'lie,' with a rhythmic, Expressions such as "捡个趴活" (scoring an easy deal) folkloric feel.

Example 2: 闹批麻了

Original: 闹批麻了

Pinyin: Nào pī má liǎo **Translation:** It's annoying to death. **Linguistic Features:**

"闹批": Indicates a high level of frustration.

"麻了": Meaning enough is enough, exaggerated style.

Example 3: 妈妈我要吃鸡儿崽崽

Original: 妈妈我要吃鸡儿崽崽

Pinyin: Māmā, wǒ yào chī jī er zǎi zǎi **Translation:** Mum, I want to eat a small chicken. **Linguistic Features:**

"鸡儿崽崽": Cuteness in the reduplication portrays a child-like manner.

2) Sociocultural Indexicality： The use of phrases like "老子" and "扯谎俩白" strikes a balance of confident and casual speech in a way that allows the speaker to gain authority while appearing approachable.

Its rhythmic expressions and colloquial intensity illustrate local authenticity, enhancing audience relatability through shared norms of dialect.

Sichuanese Dub of Rango

4) Linguistic Features：

Fig. 3 Example of Rango

Example 1: 穿得个花啷齐鼓的

Original: 穿得个花啷齐鼓的

Pinyin: Chuān dé gè huā lāng qí gǔ de

Translation: Wearing fancy clothes

Linguistic Features:

"花啷齐鼓": Talk about the other person's fancy appearance in a mocking tone.

‥ Rhythmic repetition for humorous effect.

Example 2: 我干筋瘦壳的不好吃

Original: 我干筋瘦壳的不好吃

Pinyin: Wǒ gān jīn shòu ké de bù hǎo chī **Translation:** I was skin and bones - not tasty at all. **Linguistic Features:**

"干筋瘦壳": Very vivid description.

Self-mockery about being reduced to food.

Example 3: 你搞榔头啊

Original: 你搞榔头啊

Pinyin: Nǐ gǎo láng tóu a

Translation: What are you doing?

Linguistic Features:

·   "搞榔头": Means acting strangely.

·   "啊": Softens and makes playful.

5) Sociocultural Indexicality：The use of metaphors and hyperbole such as "花啷齐鼓" and "干筋瘦壳" reflects a humorous working-class worldview. This straightforward self-description style is consistent with the tradition of vernacular Chinese to use humor to criticize and comment on society.

Sichuanese Dub of Crayon Shin-chan

6) Linguistic Features：

Example 1: 我还想喊他整巴适点儿

Original: 我还想喊他整巴适点儿

Pinyin: Wǒ hái xiǎng hǎn tā zhěng bāshì diǎn er **Translation:** I wanted him to make it better for me. **Linguistic Features:**

·   "整巴适": Means to do something correctly or satisfactorily.

"点儿": Diminutive suffix (meaning 'little' in Chinese) and softening the tone.

Fig. 5 Example of Crayon Shin-chan

Example 2: 嘿你还有点儿扯乃

Original: 嘿你还有点儿扯乃

Pinyin: Hēi nǐ hái yǒu diǎn er chě nǎi **Translation:** Hey, you are still so unreasonable. **Linguistic Features:**

·   "扯乃": Typical Sichuan dialect, meaning troublesome or unreasonable.
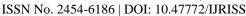
·   Reflecting the characteristics of straightforwardness

Example 3: 哎哟~飞机儿烫

Original: 哎哟~飞机儿烫

Pinyin: Ā iyō~ fēi jī er tàng

Translation: Oh, it's too hot.

Linguistic Features:

·   "飞机儿": Intensifier like "damn" in English.

7) Sociocultural Indexicality：In this example, the use of dialect features accentuates exaggerated emotional reactions and direct interpersonal criticism. Phrases like "整巴适" and "扯乃" show a cultural style of directness, which is a common characteristic of Sichuanese humor, and a habitual way of expressing your emotions when emotional.

Sichuanese Dub of Tom and Jerry

8) Linguistic Features:

Fig. 6 Example of Tom and Jerry

Example 1: 幺儿乖乖

Original: 幺儿乖乖

Pinyin: Yāo'ér guāiguāi

Translation: Baby, good boy

Linguistic Features:

· "幺儿": Affectionate term for a child.

· "乖乖": Reinforces endearment. *Example 2:* 劳资手杆都抱累瓜老 **Original:** 劳资手杆都抱累瓜老

Pinyin: Láozī shǒugǎn dōu bào lèi guā lǎo **Translation:** My hands are sore from holding it. **Linguistic Features:**

· "劳资": A self-proclaimed name of mine, now common.

· "手杆" and "累瓜老": Local expressions for body fatigue.

Example 3: 嘿假老练明天赶早哈

Original: 嘿假老练明天赶早哈

Pinyin: Hēi jiǎ lǎo liàn, míng tiān gǎn zǎo hā **Translation:** Hey, you should come early tomorrow. **Linguistic Features:**

· "假老练": Pretend to be experienced.

· "赶早哈": Local soft phrasing of "come early".

9) Sociocultural Indexicality： In this example, Sichuan dialect helps construct the character's tone, making it humorous, friendly, and down-to-earth. Phrases such as "幺儿乖乖" and "假老炼" convey both affection and sarcasm, creating an informal sense of intimacy.

Sichuanese Dub of Spy × Family

10) Linguistic Features：

Translation: What the hell, he even has a child.

Linguistic Features:

· "搞熄火": Means "to deal with."

· "嘛": Final particle expressing realization.

Example 3: 差点就想问他耍不耍朋友了

Original: 差点就想问他耍不耍朋友了

Pinyin: Chà diǎn jiù xiǎng wèn tā shuǎ bú yào péng you leme.

Translation: I almost asked him if he wanted to date

Linguistic Features:

Fig. 7 Example of Spy × Family

Example 1: 这个你要喊嬢嬢

Original: 这个你要喊嬢嬢

Pinyin: Zhè ge nǐ yào hǎn niāng niāng **Translation:** You should call her 'auntie'. **Linguistic Features:**

· "嬢嬢": Unique kinship term, regional identity marker.

· Shows familial closeness.

Example 2: 搞熄火他娃娃都有了嗦

Original: 搞熄火他娃娃都有了嗦

Pinyin: Gǎo xī huǒ tā wá wa dōu yǒu le so

·   "耍朋友": Local phrase for dating.

·   Direct tone reflects speech in romantic contexts.

Sociocultural Indexicality：

Strong expressions of emotion like "搞熄火他娃娃都有了嗦," demonstrate the bluntness inherent to Sichuanese, particularly in reference to personal or romantic encounters. In addition, the use of sentence-final particles like "嗦" reinforces the performative authenticity of Sichuanese.

Sichuanese Dub of Dinosaurs

11）Linguistic Features：

Fig 9: Example of Dinosaur

Example 1: 我怕个芽儿

Original: 我怕个芽儿

Pinyin: Wǒ pà gè yá er

Translation: What do I have to be afraid of?

Linguistic Features:

·   "芽儿": Used with irony.

·   Indicates false bravado or fear. *Example 2:* 你耍个球你耍 **Original:** 你耍个球你耍

Pinyin: Nǐ shuǎ gè qiú nǐ shuǎ **Translation:** You're playing shit! **Linguistic Features:**

· "耍个球": Slang for nonsense.

· Repetition adds sarcasm.

Example 3: 个屁批娃儿嘴巴嚼得很

Original: 个屁批娃儿嘴巴嚼得很

Pinyin: Gè pì pī wá'er zuǐ bā jiáo dé hěn **Translation:** This damn kid talks too much. **Linguistic Features:**

· "屁批": Profanity intensifier.

· "嘴巴嚼": Means talking back.

12) *Sociocultural Indexicality*：Slang phrases such as "耍个球" and "屁批娃儿" embody a digitally mediated vernacular style that is blunt, sarcastic, and emotionally direct. These phrases establish powerful indexical connections to youth culture, digital irony, and regional identity.

Sichuanese Dub of Ne Zha 2: Demon Child's Rebellion

13) Linguistic Features：

Fig. 10 Example of Ne Zha 2: Demon Child's Rebellion

Example 1: 你打我撒，你打我撒

Original: 你打我撒，你打我撒 **Pinyin:** Nǐ dǎ wǒ sa, nǐ dǎ wǒ sa **Translation:** Go on, hit me, hit me!

Linguistic Features:

· "撒": Sentence-final particle with playful provocation.

· Repetition creates teasing taunt.

Example 2: 肯定是电击导致我脑壳神经混乱

Original: 肯定是电击导致我脑壳神经混乱

Pinyin: Kěn dìng shì diàn jī dǎo zhì wǒ nǎo ké shén jīng hùn luàn

Translation: The electric shock must have disrupted my brain nerves.

Linguistic Features:

· "脑壳": Dialectal "head".

· Pseudo-scientific humor.

Example 3: 我觉得娃儿还是小点的乖

Original: 我觉得娃儿还是小点的乖

Pinyin: Wǒ jué dé wá'er háishì xiǎo diǎnr de guāi

Translation: I think the child is still well behaved when he was young.

Linguistic Features:

· "娃儿": Term for child.

· "乖": Affectionate and humorous use.

14) *Sociocultural Indexicality*：Dialect expressions like ""你打我撒"" and "脑壳神经混乱" emphasize mockery, attack and exaggerated performance.

The exaggerated intonation and localized expressions reflect the street style of Sichuan dialect.

Concluding Remarks

In these ten cases, Sichuan dialect not only appears as a means of humor or performance, but also becomes an important indicator of local identity, emotional tone and sociolinguistic stance. The repeated use of repetition, exaggeration, sentence-ending particles and kinship terms shows how dialect is actively recontextualized in the short video format.

RESULTS

Against the backdrop of Mandarin promotion, population mobility, and educational standardization, this study examines how Sichuan dialect is inherited and innovated on TikTok through multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) of 8 selected videos featuring classic Sichuan dialect dubbing. Through the above data analytics, the research questions can be further answered. From the table1 and table2 above, we can see that the TikTok video with Harrypert's Sichuan dialect dubbing has 247k likes and an extremely high number of shares. The Big Bad Fox Sichuan dialect version video has 647k likes, etc. Many popular comments have emerged under these TikTok Sichuan dialect dubbing videos, such as 'Our generation should pass on the Sichuan dialect', 'I want to make a friend from Sichuan and learn the Sichuan dialect', 'Promote the Sichuan dialect throughout the country', which have received high likes and show agreement. From this, we can see that the spread of Sichuan dialect on TikTok has indeed promoted the inheritance of the dialect and strengthened people's determination to learn the Sichuan dialect. Moreover, because the Sichuan dialect is funny and humorous, it has motivated the interest in learning the Sichuan dialect, and many people have expressed their agreement.

comments	Translation	like of comments	Does it make people want to learn dialects?
魂pei妈呀，我们老一辈的才能说这么正宗的川普，我妈就这样说的，我们这辈还是应该把以前的正宗四川话传承下去	Our generation should pass on the authentic Sichuan dialect.	2489	yes
想要一个四川的朋友捏，想学四川话，就语音嘟嘟呀	I want make a friend from Sichuan and I want to learn the Sichuan dialect.	1778	yes
向全国推广川普	The whole country should promote the learning of the Sichuan dialect.	8484	yes

Table 2: comments of these video

DISCUSSION

In the context of sociolinguistics dominated by Mandarin in China, this study explores how the Sichuan dialect has flourished on TikTok. Researchers conducted multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) on 8 short videos with high play rates of classic Sichuan dialect dubbing, and ultimately identified three important factors: algorithm mediation, multimodal stylization, and youth-driven innovation. TikTok Algorithmic Mediation

TikTok Algorithmic Mediation

TikTok's algorithm plays a crucial role in how short videos with dialect dubbing get clicked again. The dialect content on the platform gives priority to entertainment and commercial value. Using an exaggerated and humorous Sichuan accent can easily lead to higher engagement. The like rate of these videos is higher than that of non- humorous content. Similarly, Sichuan dialect videos that closely follow hot topics are more likely to attract audiences within a certain period of time

Multimodal Stylization

Apart from algorithmic dynamics, the performance of Sichuan dialect on TikTok is structured across a multilayered spectrum considering language, auditory, visual patterns, therefore we're concerned with multimodal practices that local dialects that shift to adopt to the new mediated ecosystem.

The pronunciation's that appeared in case study, such as the interjection '嗯' (softening command) and '巴适的板 ' ('excellent'), are highly conducive to imitations. They can not only accurately communicate the sentence meaning, but they are also very approachable for learning and disseminating, influencing the dissemination characteristics of new media.

Additionally, the support of auditory forms can include sounds such as Sichuan Opera drum sounds and at varying speeds electronic sounds, combining cultural traditions and modern art. These semiotic practices place dialects in a liquid, mixed and contemporary media discourse.

Youth-Driven Innovation and Cultural Expression

The most driver's need to create among young creators and creators' content represents both inheritance and invention - actively recreating dialect forms of communication, associating with comedic expressions, and enhancing linguistic dynamism.

1) Hybrid Vernaculars: Fusing Dialect with Internet Slang: Youth-led linguistic productions, such as "'搞椰头' - eg (you are acting weird)," "'屁批娃儿 ' - eg (damn kid)," and "'飞机儿烫' - eg (it's hot!)," represent a unique

linguistic mixture of "classic" Sichuanese and "digital age" slang. This hybrid vernacular crosses the spaces between, essentially merging offline regional speech with online meme culture. It also demonstrates a fluid and adaptable practice of linguistic style.

2) Dialect Dubbing and Global Discourse: Through the use of dubbing global content such as Harry Potter and Rango in Sichuan dialect, we can observe a linguistic re-appropriation by producing forms in local language patterns--albeit often localizations of mainstream English narratives that are humorous forms of narrative that apply localizing adaptations and thus enhance the folk's location of linguistic power.

3) Youth Dialect Creators` Self-identity in Digital Age: Young people are the main users of the Internet and are in the stage of identity identification and expansion of online community networks. How they express themselves is crucial. Young people who speak dialects use short videos to create, not only can they gain higher views, but also consciously or unconsciously protect and inherit the dialect in the process, which enhances their sense of identity. At the same time, their audience may be people who are far away from home, and they will feel more cordial when they hear the local dialect, which enhances the construction of dialect- dominated online communities. Audiences in other regions will also become interested in this region after watching these short videos in dialects for a long time. In recent years, Chengdu and the capital of Sichuan Province have become popular tourist destinations under the influence of Sichuan dialect, driving economic benefits. Enhanced local discourse power, as evidenced by the popularity of some dialect-related merchandise.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we investigate how emerging creator generations creatively inherit and shape Sichuan dialect in new forms in the TikTok app, offering a new approach to regenerate the vitality of the dialect in a digital context. Based on a multimodal discourse analysis of Sichuan dialect dubbing in TikTok videos, we found that the dissemination of dialects on TikTok was mediated by three intertwined processes: algorithm mediation, multimodal stylization, and youth-driven innovation.

Based on the data analysis, it can be assumed that funny videos dubbed in a Sichuan dialect are more appealing. Young creators are essential to this process. By using dialect expression global media, as with Harry Potter, local expressions, and absurd humour and self-deprecation, they not only reconstruct global discourse but also create a sense of identity, keep the dialect alive, and position linguistic ideology. On the one hand, TikTok can support the dialect's ethnolinguistic vitality by supporting visibility, status, and community relevance (Giles et al.,1977; UNESCO, 2003). On the other hand, all the way that dialects can be staged as 'authentic', 'funny', or even 'nostalgic', reflects other ideologies around language that are formed by social power and identity, and the logic of the platform (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Overall, the material inheritance of new media, specifically TikTok, for Sichuan dialects demonstrates both innovative development and also revival. The performativity of dialects in digital space, especially with young dialect heirs, depends not only on algorithmic recommendations but also on the provision of diverse content and clear policy guidance. In this language practice, readers will understand dialects, including Sichuan dialects can potentially things met, and the met performativity to engage in the innovative inheritance is welcomed can coexist or overlap.

RECOMMENDATION

Moving Beyond Algorithm Optimisation:

Operationalising Platform-Level Support for Dialectal Diversity While "algorithm optimisation" makes a frequent pass on topics associated with digital language preservation, it is still necessary to translate algorithm optimisation into concrete strategies that could be operationalised by a platform to facilitate dialectal diversity. We recommend the following actions:

1) Dialect Tagging and Recognition Tools: Platforms like TikTok should build autopilot dialect recognition models (either using phonology, lexicon, or captions as the base) to tag dialect language content. This would help mitigate dialect videos from being filtered out or harshly downranked against purpose built, general content moderation tools.

2) *Content Channels Dedicated to Dialectal Content:* Create curated spaces or channels in the app, for e.g.,

Dialect Stories, to archive regionally situated language content across fields of entertainment, education and culture. This needs to have a strong presence on the homepage or explore section of the app.

3) *Incentive Visibility Models:* Allow dialectal creators to get exposure without regard to the performance of their content, as an incentive visibility model for e.g., a guarantee that whatever is trending would (besides virality) contain a percentage of dialectal material. This could allow up and coming or experimental dialect creators to have some initial traction before going the full length, on the backs of comedy-centric-driven viewership.

4) *Transparency Reports on Algorithms:* Platforms should regularly report on their transparency policies to include numbers and information on material that has been tagged as dialect and its visibility, recommendation rate, and engagement levels. This will help enforce accountability when it comes to preserving linguistic diversity.

Platform Policies Focused on Dialect and Creator Ecosystem and Support

In addition to changes to algorithms, supporting dialect continuity will also require policy level interventions and institutional support systems. Below are suggestions that focus on how both platforms and government bodies can encourage a more inclusive creator environment:

1) Create Dialect Creator Incubators: Social media platforms and local governments should co- fund an incubator-like creator training program aimed specifically at dialect speaking creators. The incubator can cover topics like storytelling, video editing, building a digital brand, and more importantly being linguistically authentic.

2) Create a Dialect Diversity Fund: This fund will promote long-form educational or underrepresented dialect content that may not be commercially viable but has cultural significance. It could be used as grants, awards, or matching funding when crowdfunding.

3) Use digital platforms to scaffold dialect education Collaborate with universities and cultural organizations to co-create educational series (e.g., "Learn Sichuanese in 30 Seconds") as shorts, reels or live tutorials. These should be premiered under official platforms supported banners especially during weeks of national language celebration weeks or cultural holidays.

4) Incentivize campaigns on regional languages: Policy actors (such as local cultural bureaux or the Ministry of Education) are able to lead regional language hashtag campaigns, public challenges, or regional influencers to promote the visibility of dialect, similar to successful language revitalisation seen in countries
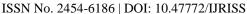
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